

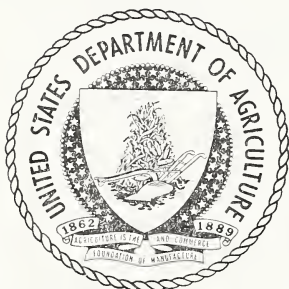
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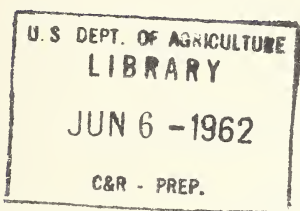
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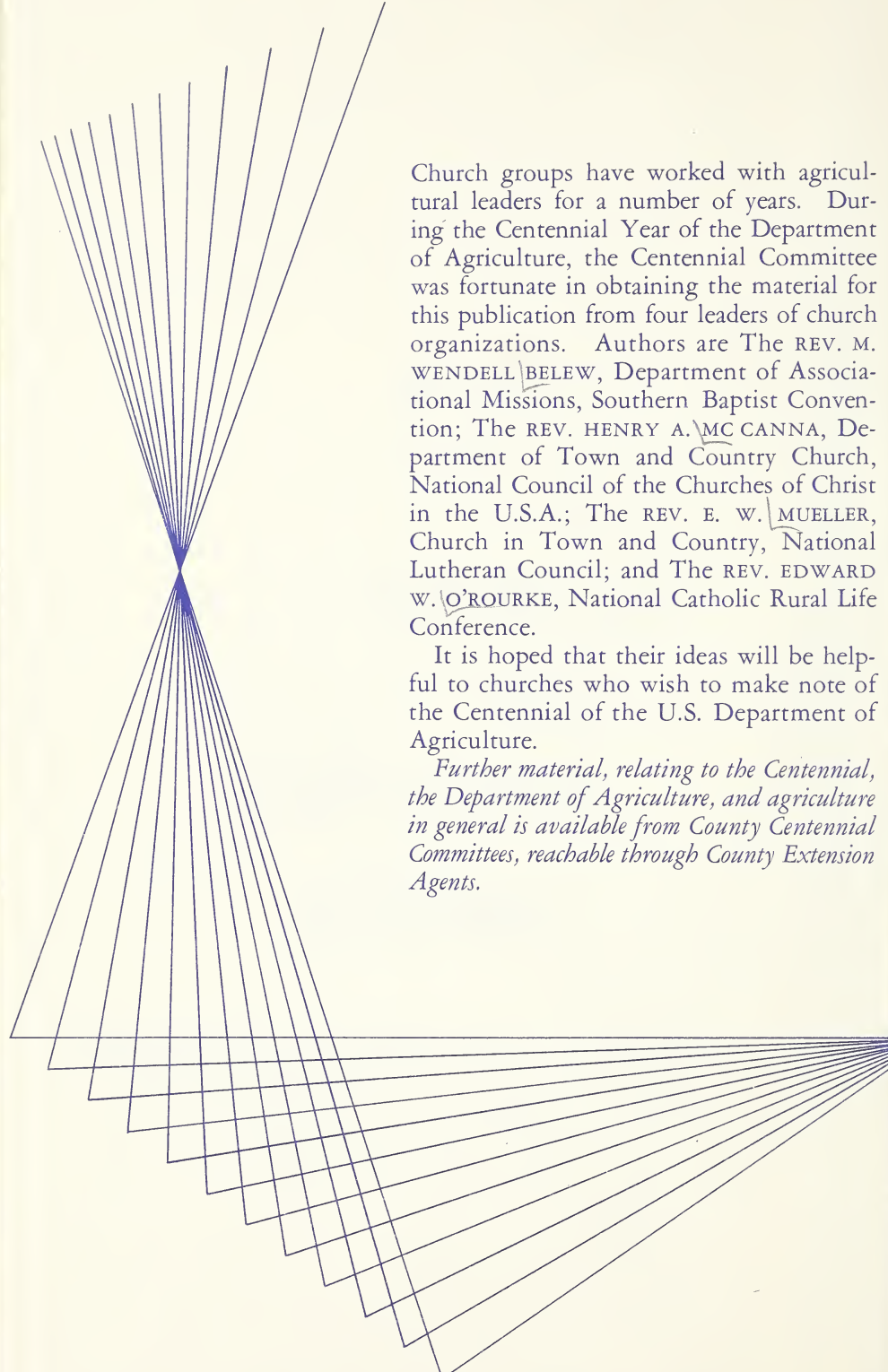


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X *the CHURCH*
and
AGRICULTURAL
PROGRESS X



Church groups have worked with agricultural leaders for a number of years. During the Centennial Year of the Department of Agriculture, the Centennial Committee was fortunate in obtaining the material for this publication from four leaders of church organizations. Authors are The REV. M. WENDELL BELEW, Department of Associational Missions, Southern Baptist Convention; The REV. HENRY A. MCCANNA, Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; The REV. E. W. MUELLER, Church in Town and Country, National Lutheran Council; and The REV. EDWARD W. O'ROURKE, National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

It is hoped that their ideas will be helpful to churches who wish to make note of the Centennial of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Further material, relating to the Centennial, the Department of Agriculture, and agriculture in general is available from County Centennial Committees, reachable through County Extension Agents.

the CHURCH and AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS

Introduction



IN MAY 15 IN 1862 when Congress and President Lincoln created the United States Department of Agriculture, one American farmer was producing enough food and fiber for five people. Today, during the Centennial Year of the Department, one farmer grows enough food and fiber for 26 people, and his efficiency still surges upward.

Now our food is of superior quality. Its variety seems without limit. Its cost requires only a fifth of our take-home pay.

The very strength of our Nation depends heavily upon the unequalled productivity of the American farmer. And, as both producer and consumer, his contribution has been outstanding in helping the Nation achieve its high standard of living.

Agriculture is a vast industry. It employs more than the combined employment in transportation, public utilities, the steel industry, and the automobile industry. It spends \$25-\$26 billion annually for goods and services to produce crops and livestock; another \$15 billion for the same things city people buy.

Agriculture creates so much employment that 4 out of every 10 jobs in private employment relate to agriculture. For instance, 10 million people have jobs storing, transporting, processing, and merchandising the products of agriculture; 6 million have jobs providing the supplies farmers use.

Agriculture enables each of us to choose from as many as 5,000 different foods when we go to market—fresh, canned, frozen, concentrated, dehydrated, ready-mixed, ready-to-serve, or in heat-and-serve form.

It provides the equivalent of about 24 cotton house dresses or 30 dress shirts for every man, woman, and child in the Nation.

Farmers and other small woodland owners control 54 percent of the Nation's commercial forest—providing building materials and paper—even nitrocellulose, a major ingredient of some solid fuel propellants for missiles.

The United States is the world's largest exporter of agricultural products—60 million acres of our 316 million harvested acres produce for export. Largely because of agriculture, our food and other farm products are helping to relieve hunger and to promote economic growth in the newly developing nations of the world.

This then is the farmer's success story. To it, the Department of Agriculture has contributed research, economic aid, education, technical help, and other services. But, essentially, the world's most efficient and productive agriculture springs from the hard work, the ingenuity, and the ability of American farmers and ranchers.

As we observe the Centennial of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it is fitting that we count the blessings which we all enjoy as a result of 100 years of agricultural progress. Yet it is essential that we be reminded of another blessing relating to the spiritual resources which have made our agricultural progress possible. At the same time, it is fitting that we remind ourselves of some of the responsibilities which our abundance entails.



AMERICA HAS BEEN BLESSED with abundant agricultural production, based on rich resources of land and human creativity. Behind the given natural and human resources stands the benevolent

God—Source
of Our
Creativity

Creator.

When people from many nations came to settle this vast continent, they found fertile soil and favorable climate. In this new

land, they could sow their knowledge of plant and animal life in order to harvest life-sustaining food and fiber for man.

From the beginning of our nation to the present, man has been able to increase the productivity of resources from agriculture by describing, discovering and working with laws created and governed by God for the benefit of mankind. These laws or principles pertain as much to the internal combustion engine as they do to the genetic traits of a certain plant. The mystery of electricity and the ecology of the micro-organisms of the soil both contribute in a special way to agricultural production. But both are governed by God.

Basing its enterprise on the given Creation, American agriculture has been able to advance the production of food to such a degree as to supply the nation abundantly and to give encouragement to the peoples of the world. At the milestone of the Centennial of the United States Department of Agriculture, the American nation magnifies its gratitude to the Creator.



MAN DOES NOT WORK ALONE.

The bounty that springs from our verdant fields is not solely the product of an industrious and inventive people.

Once, in ages past, when people came to be upon the earth, it must have been that they perceived the growing things; that plants produced seeds, that seeds fell to the ground, and that in a certain season the seeds sprouted and grew into plants which produced food. And so, one day a man held, within his hand, a seed. He looked upon it and considered its mysteries.

He knew that as a man he could not make a seed like that, but he could plant it in a fertile soil.

He could not cause the seed to sprout, but he could pull away the weeds that would choke the tender shoot.

He could not cause the sun to shine nor the rain to fall, but he could dig about the plant to conserve the moisture in the soil.

He could not make the days of winter, summer, spring or the harvest, but he could plant the seed in a season which would permit ample days for a harvest.

Above, beyond, and superseding everything he did was God, giver of the divine ingredient of life and growth, of sun, rain, soil and season.

**Man—Coworker
With God**

Farm-City Inter- dependence



IN THINKING ABOUT our agricultural blessings, we often overlook the completely artificial and totally unrealistic distinctions between town and country. In the past neither could function in isolation from the other even though such a folklore was declared. Now we are beginning to realize that interdependence is total for the nation. As each segment of our society desires to enjoy the full advantages of the total, it becomes increasingly apparent that interdependence cannot be ignored.

Contributing to the realization that our society is becoming more urbane is the fact that rural residents want, can expect to obtain, or already have, all of the transportation, communication, social, health and cultural services common to urban residents. Similarly the advantages which contribute to better family, group and recreational life—once primarily rural—are now sought after and largely the possession of urban people.

The diversifying of industrial operations and business and professional services has also made greater inter-relatedness.

In the past, the country has provided men, materials and motives which the city has turned into multitudes, machines and managers. This, of course, continues to prevail, but the fabric of our society is becoming more interwoven.

Family of Nations



WE CAN WELL REJOICE that our own society is more consciously aware of interdependence, but this realization must also extend beyond our borders to the rest of the world. The dream that has been fulfilled for us in far too many other parts of the world remains a nightmare of poverty, disease and especially hunger. We recognize that the means to meet these needs are now available.

We now find it our present destiny to aid further in the elimination of suffering. The celebration of 100 years of progress for agriculture and rural life in this nation would be a hollow thing unless some way of more adequately aiding those in need is forthcoming. Of particular urgency is the need for food which persists throughout much of the world.

The suffering brought about by hunger is especially noted by the wisdom of Proverbs 27:7, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

Tests on the effects of hunger conducted during World War

It demonstrated the absolute devastation to personality which hunger causes. Of 36 highly moral men, four broke completely, and it took six months for the other 32 to return to normalcy.

The current Rural Areas Development and Food for Peace programs are answers to the call of the hungry.

As the rest of the world stands hopefully poised for a better day and looks to us for bread, we are determined not to give a stone.



Sharing Our Abundance

WE AMERICANS HAVE AN ABUNDANCE of food which exceeds our foreseeable needs. There are, however, in the emerging nations of the world, millions of people who are undernourished. We are obliged in justice and charity to share our abundance with them.

It will not suffice merely to give away our food indiscriminately. This might undermine the self respect of other peoples. Eventually, our food supply would be used up and the problem of hunger would return.

Instead, we must use our abundance as capital to help emerging nations build up their agricultural and industrial potential, to help them construct dams, roads and other useful structures.

Great changes are taking place in the underdeveloped areas of the world. Efforts are being made to improve agriculture and build new industries. As this takes place, many people who formerly eked out an existence on a tiny plot of land begin work on roads, dams, factories and irrigation systems. They need food. If it is not available, inflation occurs and nullifies all the progress that has been made. Food is the most important resource in the crucial years of the industrial and agricultural development of an emerging nation.

The United States government, through its Food for Peace program, is making significant contributions along these lines. Through the Peace Corps and several other technical assistance and foreign aid programs, our government is also sharing with other nations some of the knowledge and equipment which are causes of abundance.

As we celebrate the Centennial of the United States Department of Agriculture, these efforts should be expanded. These expanded efforts to aid our brothers in other lands might be made as a thank offering for the countless blessings Almighty God has bestowed on the American people during the past 100 years.

Observance of the Centennial continues throughout 1962. On Thanksgiving Day it seems appropriate that the gratitude we express be given concrete expression in the form of sharing more of our abundance and the causes of our abundance with the peoples of the emerging nations.

Speaking of sharing abundance, President Kennedy declared in his inaugural address, "To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right."

Because it is right, we urge that this great and grateful nation share even more of its abundance. Food has always been a precious possession. In the present world situation it is a powerful weapon—not of war—but of peace. With it we can end hunger. With it we can strengthen emerging nations. With it we can lay the foundations for a lasting peace.



